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23 September 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Motivations and Probable Lines of Policy of Mendes-France vis-a-vis German Rearmament

1. We estimate that Mendes-France sincerely believes that economic and social reforms are fundamental to a revitalization of France, and that all other considerations must be subordinated to achieve that goal. Insisting that France has undertaken commitments beyond its strength, he has followed his announced policy of liquidating such commitments by presenting the French Assembly with the necessity of making clear, if distasteful, decisions. Moreover, he has attacked with vigor those questions which divide the nation and stand in the way of progress on what he regards as the fundamental problems of France. He believes himself most fitted to cope with those problems and is determined to remain in the position to do so. However, he remains in office on the basis of a heterogeneous majority which leaves him little room for maneuver.

2. Mendes-France acted on EDC within the frame of his announced policy and although it is possible that sinister ulterior motives (e.g., a deal over Indochina) are responsible for his weak presentation of and flight for EDC before the Chamber, we believe that his action is more plausibly explained otherwise. He probably estimated that no matter how much he worked for EDC he could not muster the votes, and that a defeat in this matter would jeopardize his chances of staying in power, let alone his chances of success with respect to his all-important program of economic reform. With respect to the general problem of Germany, he has publicly stated that an unarmed, neutral status for Germany is unobtainable and that German rearmament is inevitable, with or without French control.

3. At London, we believe that Mendes-France, even if only to preserve his political position against attacks from the "pro-Europeans" in the Assembly, will try to reach an agreement on general principles. Such an agreement probably would leave vital questions unresolved, but might permit the envisaged month-long negotiations by experts to proceed. However, the

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2. Mendes-France acted on RDC within the frame of his announced policy and although it is possible that sinister ulterior motives (e.g., a deal over Indochina) are responsible for his weak presentation of and fight for RDC before the Chamber, we believe that his action is more plausibly explained otherwise. He probably estimated that no matter how much he worked for RDC he could not muster the votes, and that a defeat in this matter would jeopardize his chances of staying in power, let alone his chances of success with respect to his all-important program of economic reform. With respect to the general problem of Germany, he has publicly stated that an unarmed, neutral status for Germany is unobtainable and that German rearmament is inevitable, with or without French control.

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French are likely to insist on certain conditions, such as making the Brussels and North Atlantic treaties co-terminous; obtaining a UK military commitment via the Brussels Pact; and controlling the levels of West German forces and armaments. The problem of the Saar may also prove an obstacle to French agreement to any early settlement on West Germany.

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